

Message Text

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15

ACTION AF-06

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R 211420Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY CAPE TOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4655

INFO AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 0576

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, RH, SF

SUBJECT: BELIEVE THAT SMITH MAY SCUTTLE ANY CHANCE OF PEACEFUL
SETTLEMENT IN RHODESIA

1. THERE SOME FEAR BEING EXPRESSED IN SOUTH AFRICA THAT
IAN SMITH, WHO HAS BEEN FOLLOWING A DELAYING TACTIC RE
TALKS WITH ANC, NOW PLANS TO TAKE MEASURES THAT WOULD END
ONCE AND FOR ALL A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT WHICH WOULD EVENTU-
ATE IN MAJORITY RULE IN RHODESIA. FOR EXAMPLE, FRONT-PAGE
HEADLINE ARTICLE IN SUNDAY TIMES MAY 18 STATES: "RELATIONS
BETWEEN RHODESIA AND SOUTH AFRICA ARE DETERIORATING
RAPIDLY AS MR. IAN SMITH ADOPTS A 'SPOILING' STRATEGY IN
A LAST-DITCH ATTEMPT TO ENMESH SOUTH AFRICA IN THE RHODESIAN
CRISIS. THERE ARE INDICATIONS THAT THE RHODESIAN LEADER
MAY NOW HAVE SCANT INTENTION OF REACHING A MAJORITY SETTLE-
MENT WITH THE ANC BASED ON PROGRESS TOWARD MAJORITY RULE.
FURTHER, IT SEEMS THAT HE HOPES THAT SOUTH AFRICA WILL BE
SUCKED INTO THE CRISIS THAT WOULD INEVITABLY RESULT FROM
A BREAKDOWN IN NEGOTIATIONS AND THE RESULTANT RENEWAL OF
GUERRILLA WAR ALONG THE ZAMBEZI."

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2. BASING ITS ARTICLE ON SAG SOURCES "AND OTHER PEOPLE IN

CONTACT WITH RHODESIAN LEADERS," SUNDAY TIMES SAID IT CLEAR SMITH HAD NO INTENTION OF ABANDONING WHITE CONTROL AND THAT HE WOULD "PLAY HIS CARDS IN SUCH A WAY THAT THE BREAKDOWN OF THE TALKS WILL BE INEVITABLE." SMITH WOULD THEN BLAME WHAT HE WOULD TERM "EXTREME DEMANDS" OF ANC LEADERS AND WOULD HOPE SOUTH AFRICAN PUBLIC OPINION WOULD FORCE VORSTER TO SUPPORT RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT IN CONFRONTATION WITH BLACK AFRICA.

3. A SIMILAR ASSESSMENT WAS MADE LAST WEEK BY A SOUTH AFRICAN ECONOMIST WHO, AFTER RETURNING FROM TRIP TO RHODESIA, GAVE US, AND BRITISH EMBASSY AS WELL, COPY OF DOCUMENT HE SAID HE HAD PRESENTED TO PRIME MINISTER. ACCORDING TO SOURE, RHODESIAN GOVERNMENT "WILL SHORTLY IMPLEMENT A PLAN OF ACTION" WHICH WOULD INCLUDE A) AN INCREASE IN PROPAGANDA TO DISCREDIT ANC, B) AN APPEAL TO CONSERVATIVE RHODESIAN AFRICANS TO OPPOSE ANC, C) THE RE-DETENTION OF MOST LIBERATION MOVEMENT LEADERS, D) THE RESUMPTION OF "OFFENSIVE AGAINST TERRORIST ACTIVITIES" AND INTENSIFICATION OF SECURITY MEASURES, AND E) A DIRECT APPEAL TO SOUTH AFRICANS TO SUPPORT SMITH ON GROUNDS OF INABILITY OF BLACK LEADERS IN RHODESIA TO AGREE ON REASONABLE CONDITIONS FOR NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

4. DURING DISCUSSION WITH VORSTER MAY 16, UK AMBASSADOR BOTTOMLEY SAID HE HAD HEARD REPORTS TO THE EFFECT THAT SMITH MIGHT TRY TO MAKE IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR TALKS TO CONTINUE. VORSTER REPLIED THAT ALL INDICATIONS HE HAD WERE THAT SMITH STILL WANTED A NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT.

5. COMMENT: WE ARE UNABLE TO ASSESS VALIDITY OF CONTENTION THAT SMITH ACTUALLY SEEKING TO SCUTTLE RHODESIAN TALKS. AS YET WE HAVE NO INDICATION OF THIS FROM OUR SOUTH AFRICAN SOURCES. IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER HE WILLING TO TAKE GAMBLE IMPLICIT IN WHAT SUNDAY TIMES AND THE SOUTH AFRICAN BUSINESS-MAN BELIEVE TO BE COURSE OF ACTION HE WILL FOLLOW. IF HE WERE TO DO SO, WE DOUBT THAT HE WOULD SUCCEED IN ENMESHING SOUTH AFRICA DIRECTLY IN RHODESIAN CONFLICT.
BOWDLER

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